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Chinese Checkers!

Last December saw new Government initiatives directed specifically towards imported Chinese medicines. The Oriental community, fearing restrictions on the use of their traditional medicinal herbs, organised a public meeting in Toronto, inviting representatives from Health and Welfare Canada to explain the new Government position.

I could not resist attending this meeting myself and after hearing both sides speak, it seems that these remedies are now subject to the same Food and Drug regulations that all other herbal preparations have to deal with. Packaging must now be bi-(tri?)-lingual, and no claims may be made in regard to their medicinal effectiveness, unless of course the remedy has a Government approved Drug Identification Number (DIN).

Unfortunately Health and Welfare Canada appear to have adopted the 'let's see how difficult we can make it for them' approach, when it comes to issuing these DIN numbers. This was amply illustrated at the meeting, with many fully documented examples of importers and manufacturers bending over backwards to conform to regulations, that seemed to change as frequently as the hairstyles of the Government bureaucrats involved!

As a service to our members the Society has available a full(?) list of the restricted Chinese herb products. The size of this list prohibits us from printing it here, so if you would like a copy, please write to us and we will mail one out to you.

However, the importation and sale of non-proscribed Chinese herbs in their natural form, i.e. roots, leaves, barks etc. is NOT affected. Dong quai (Chinese angelica), will still be available at your herb store. Although for how long is anyone's guess. Our most useful and effective herbs are classed as restricted, with more joining the proscribed lists than ever before. How long before your chamomile tea becomes an illegal drug? Don't laugh, it's happening. Yet thousands of our citizens are addicted to the legal botanic drug caffeine, with the prospect of any restriction concerning its use, non-existent. What on earth is going on here?